



San Diego County Water Authority

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January 26, 2009

Chair Richard Wright and Regional Board Members

San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

San Diego – Region 9

9174 Sky Park Court, Suite 100

San Diego, CA 92123

MEMBER AGENCIES

Carlsbad
Municipal Water District

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City of Escondido

City of National City

City of Oceanside

City of Poway

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Hulme Water District

Oliverhan
Municipal Water District

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Municipal Water District

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Ramona
Municipal Water District

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Municipal Water District

San Diego Water District

San Luis Irrigation District

South Bay Irrigation District

Vallejos Water District

Valley Center
Municipal Water District

Vista Irrigation District

Yuma
Municipal Water District

OTHER REPRESENTATIVE

County of San Diego

RE: Carlsbad Desalination Project, February 11 hearing on Marine Life Mitigation Plan #R9-2008-0039

Dear Chairman Wright and Board members:

On behalf of the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), I am writing to encourage your Board to vote in favor of the Marine Life Mitigation Plan for the Carlsbad Desalination Project at the February 11 hearing. The Water Authority has written several times in favor of this project and I firmly believe that you understand the significance of your actions to advance a highly reliable regional water supply during this challenging period of drought and unprecedented restrictions on the State Water Project.

Our Regional Water Facilities Master Plan (RWFMP) calls for the development of a diverse, sustainable resource mix in order to provide supply reliability to our region. The RWFMP includes targets for conservation, recycling, groundwater recovery and other resources, including 89,600 acre-feet of seawater desalination by 2020. Our 2005 Urban Water management Plan relies on the implementation of the Carlsbad desalination plant in 2011 to achieve over 60 percent of that goal. Seawater desalination – and particularly the Carlsbad Desalination Project - is critical to diversifying San Diego's supplies and reducing our dependence on imported water.

The dire conditions of the state's water supply as we head into a third year of drought, coupled with regulatory-driven cuts in imported water from the State Water Project, are constraining water supplies to San Diego to the point where the potential for cutbacks is becoming increasingly likely. Further, because of recent regulatory decisions, this is a multi-year situation that presents significant challenges for San Diego County and the state. In response, the Water Authority has stepped up its long-standing water conservation efforts. But realistically, we cannot overcome regulatory and hydrologic drought impacts through water conservation alone.

A public agency providing a safe and reliable water supply to the San Diego region

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Our recent drought response planning contemplates the Carlsbad Desalination Project delivering water at full capacity to the region in early 2012. This project is expected to be the largest new local water supply for the region in recent history and could not come at a more critical time.

The urgency of the current water supply situation cannot be understated. Governor Schwarzenegger and the entire San Diego County state and congressional delegation support the Carlsbad Desalination Project because of its enormous value to water supply reliability and the regional economy. Any further delay in the project's regulatory approvals will only complicate our task of providing a reliable water supply to San Diego County's three million residents.

The Carlsbad Desalination Project is essential to the Water Authority's ability to achieve its water diversification goals. The Water Authority urges all members of the Regional Water Quality Control Board to approve the Carlsbad Desalination Project's final conditions.

Sincerely,



Maureen A. Stapleton
General Manager

cc:

David King, Vice Chairman
Eric Anderson, Board Member
Grant Destache, Board Member
George Loveland, Board Member
Wayne Rayfield, Board Member
Gary Thompson, Board Member
Kris Weber, Board Member
John Robertus, Executive Director
Catherine Hagan, Regional Board Attorney